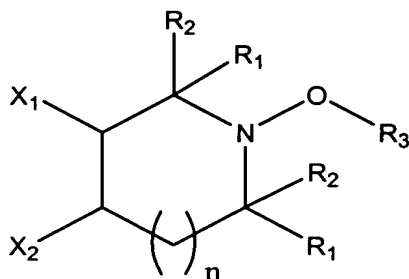


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a block copolymer ~~copolymers~~ by means of radicalic polymerization, which comprises:

a) polymerizing a vinylaromatic monomer at a temperature higher than, or equal to, 120°C, in the presence of a radicalic initiating system, consisting of a compound having general formula (I):



wherein R₁ and R₂, the same or different, represent a methyl or ethyl radical, X₁ represents a hydrogen atom, X₂ represents a hydrogen atom or a hydroxyl, or X₁ and X₂, the same or different, represent a C₁-C₄ (iso)alkyl radical, or, they jointly form an aromatic ring, n is equal to zero or 1, and R₃ represents a radical selected from one of the following groups:

-C(CH₃)₂-CN[[:]],

-C(CH₃)₂-Ph[[:]], or

-CHCH₃Ph;

or R₃ is absent, as in that position there is an un-coupled electron, used in a mixture with radical generator compounds (G) selected from peroxides, peresters, percarbonates, or azobisdialkyldinitriles, and with molar ratios I/G lower than 4;

until a conversion of the monomer ranging from 5 to 99.9% is obtained;

b) feeding to the polymerization mixture of step (a), after obtaining the desired conversion, a monomer deriving from (meth)acrylic acid in such a quantity that, at the end of

the polymerization, the total weight of the block copolymer, Mw_1 is lower than 1,000,000, operating at the same temperature, and in the presence of the same initiating system;

c) recovering, at the end of the polymerization, the block copolymer thus obtained.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the R_3 group is $-C(CH_3)_2-CN$.

Claim 3 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the R_3 group is $-C(CH_3)_2-Ph$.

Claim 4 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the R_3 group is $-CHCH_3Ph$.

Claim 5 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the R_3 group is absent.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the previous claims~~, wherein the polymerization of both step (a) and step (b) is carried out at a temperature ranging from 120 to 150°C.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process, according to claim 1 ~~any of the previous claims~~, wherein the initiator having general formula (I) is present in concentrations ranging from 0.01 to 2% in moles with respect to the total moles of the monomers fed.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the initiator having general formula (I) is used with free radical generators (G)_n selected from

dibenzoyl peroxide, dicumyl peroxide, or N,N'-azobis-(diisobutyronitrile); and with molar ratios I/G ranging from 1 to 3.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the previous claims~~, wherein the polymerization of both steps (a) and (b) is carried out batchwise, in continuous or semi-continuous at a temperature higher than 120°C and at a pressure, which is such as to maintain the monomers in liquid phase.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any of the previous claims~~, wherein in the radicalic initiating system, having general formula (I), X₁ and X₂ jointly form an aromatic ring, and n is equal to zero.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 10, wherein the initiator having general formula (I) is selected from:

1,1,3,3-tetraethyl-2-(2-cyanoprop-2-yl)-2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole;
1,1,3,3-tetraethyl-2-(2-phenylprop-2-yl)-2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole;
1,1,3,3-tetraethyl-2-(2-phenylethyl)-2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole;
1,1,3,3-tetramethyl-2-(2-cyanoprop-2-yl)-2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole;
1,1,3,3-tetramethyl-2-(2-phenylprop-2-yl)-2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole; or
1,1,3,3-tetramethyl-2-(2-phenylethyl)-2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): Block copolymers, based on vinylaromatic monomers and monomers deriving from (meth)acrylic acid, obtained with the process according to claim 1 ~~any of the previous claims~~.